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Man guilty of trying to sneak alien into Detroit

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An Erie, Pa., businessman, identified by his lawyer as a top aide to the late Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek and a former U.S. intelligence agent, was convicted by a federal judge Monday of conspiring to smuggle an illegal alien into Detroit for \$500.

In handing down the verdict, U.S. District Judge Ralph Guy called 54-year-old Lo-Jen Fu's bizarre defense "a thin tissue of fabrication."

"The story he came up with can only be described as incredible. No part of it is credible."

Fu and his lawyer claimed Fu had been "set up" to be arrested because of investigative and diplomatic work he had done for the FBI, the CIA, the White House under President Richard Nixon, the U.S. Navy and the Canadian government.

Guy noted that while he believed "some of what" Fu said about his background, "no (government officials) came forward to defend Fu."

ACCORDING TO the indictment, Fu, also known as Frank Wong and Frank Lo-Jen, accepted \$500 of an \$1,800 fee to arrange the illegal entry into the United States of Yu-Min Chiang, a 29-year-old citizen of Taiwan who had been attending high school in Toronto.

The indictment says that on or around May 8, Fu drove Chiang from Toronto to Windsor, where he arranged to have Chiang taken across the Detroit River by Richard Barber, a part-time employee of Lakeview Marina.

However, Barber contacted Canadian authorities, who asked to him go along with the scheme, according to testimony. David Knoll, Fu's attorney, maintained that Fu and Chiang had gone to Windsor on a fishing trip.

Barber and Chiang allegedly left Windsor in a 14-foot boat sometime before midnight May 10, arriving at 3 a.m. in Detroit at the foot of Alter Road. Fu, who had fallen asleep in his car while allegedly waiting to pick up Chiang, was arrested by officers from the U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Fu, described by a witness as an avid fisherman who often sleeps in his car, said he drove to Detroit intending to get a boat engine repaired at Tommy's Marina, where he was arrested. He said he had planned to sleep until daylight, then rent a boat at the marina and meet Barber and Chiang on the Canadian side of the river to go fishing. The boat engine was in his car trunk when he was arrested.

KNOLL SAID the three men decided not to go fishing in one boat because Barber weighed "at least 250 pounds." He also said that Fu knew the other two men were going out fishing late at night, but declined to go along because of bad weather and because he had already gone fishing that afternoon. He said Fu was "completely surprised" when the two men showed up at his car in the middle of the night.

Chiang and Barber, an American fishing guide who lives in Windsor, both testified against Fu in court.

In an interview during a break in the trial, Knoll said he believed Chiang, a member of Taiwan's major political party, was in Canada as an agent for the Taiwanese government. Chiang's father, a retired general, had been involved in national security matters, and Fu was trying to get information on an arms deal between Canadian criminals and the Argentine government, Knoll said.

He said Chiang approached Barber about the crossing, and the two duped Fu. Knoll also suggested that U.S. and Canadian authorities may have been involved in "setting Fu up."

Fu faces another indictment for allegedly attempting to drive an illegal alien across the border into Buffalo, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. That trial is set to begin this week.

In the Detroit case, Fu's passport was confiscated and he was freed on \$100,000 personal bond. He faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison, \$10,000 in fines, or both, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Blanche Bruce. No sentencing date has been set.